

ST NINIAN'S SAYS: HARK!

Church Diary for February 2017

Sunday Services – Holy Communion (Scottish Liturgy 1982) at 10.30 followed by refreshments (good coffee!). Children are always welcome to sit at the front with their parents where toys and other activities are available.

Sunday 12 February: An ecumenical service and time of fellowship at Lord Hay's Court 3pm.

Friday 17 February at 7.30pm-8.30pm with refreshments: St Ninian's is hosting this **Citywide Prayer Gathering** which has been meeting monthly for the last year to pray specifically for the city of Aberdeen as it welcomes refugees and asylum seekers into our communities. This is a successful ecumenical initiative which has brought together Christians from across the denominations to unite in prayer for peace and reconciliation and to praise God.

Craft Group meetings in February – Tuesdays 14th and 28th: 2pm-3.30pm.

Tuesday 21 February Vestry meeting at 7.30pm in Kingswells.



Dear Friends,

It's said that despite our best intentions, despite our peace treaties, we never learn from history. We vow not to make the same mistakes, even in our personal lives, but discover that we have it within our capability to make new ones. Do we just stop trying? Do we decide not to raise our voices? Do we cease to protest because it just doesn't seem to make any difference?

Why did Jesus not just walk away in order to avoid what was inevitably going to happen? One reason might be that somehow, somewhere, Jesus found in us a cause for hope.....and somehow, somewhere his words are true for us today. These words are given to us in chapters 5 to 7 in the Gospel of Matthew – the Sermon on the Mount – we will read several passages of this over the next few Sundays. It begins with the Beatitudes, words read yet again at the inauguration of the new President of the United States of America.

One of these strikes me as particularly significant at this time: “Blessed are the meek for they will inherit the earth.” What good is “meekness” at a time like this, we might ask? Like many words in the Bible, this doesn't translate easily in a way which gives the original meaning its same resonance. We rarely hear our children encouraged to be “meek”. It has connotations of standing back, standing aside, not finding any voice.....a doormat, even? But to describe Jesus as being “meek” is to remember him standing before Caiaphas, the high priest, the teachers of the law, the elders and finally before the Governor, Pontius Pilate, as many made their accusations against him.

He stood for the truth which he held firm within his own being. To think of Jesus as “meek” is to remember the times he was questioned by the Pharisees in their attempts to trick him. He did not rise to the bait but instead told them stories – stories which bore into their hearts, stories which they understood were about them - like the woman taken in adultery, whose accusers were asked to throw the first stone – and one by one, melted into the crowd.

These stories, like the Beatitudes, are for “us”, not just for “them”. Perhaps the more we study these words, the more we would like to be like Jesus. As the season of Lent approaches, let’s take heart from what might just be possible – that Jesus gives us these words because he trusts that our hearts will be penetrated by his love, his wisdom and his meekness. The Sermon on the Mount is not easy listening but it comes from deep within the heart of God as Jesus speaks about the possibilities of the Kingdom of God. “The Kingdom is near” – let us look forward with hope to the time when the earth will be inherited by those who stand for truth and may we play our own small part in that.

God bless you in your prayers and in your intentions.

Rev'd Joan

Lent at St Ninian's

Shrove Tuesday Pancake Party – 28 February in the welcome area of the church from 6pm – 8pm. Please bring your favourite fillings.

Ash Wednesday 1st March – Celebration of Holy Communion with Imposition of Ashes: 7.30pm in the church.

Wellsprings – a prayer initiative to begin during Lent.

To pray is to draw closer to the heart of God. In our Sunday service, we offer prayers each week for the church, the world, for the needs of others and ourselves. But prayer is as much about listening quietly to hear what God might be saying to each one of us.

Lectio Divina - "holy reading" - is an ancient spiritual practice from the Christian monastic tradition that allows us to experience the presence of God through reading and listening, prayer, meditation and contemplation.

It is a way of praying that energises us and leaves us feeling more peaceful within ourselves and therefore more ready to engage with the reality of the life we live on a day to day basis.

It helps us to take time to discover the rich truths of the Word of God.

I'd like to invite you to come to a new group called "**Wellsprings**" on **Thursday mornings beginning on 2** followed by refreshments.

Emmaus: The Way of Faith

Emmaus: The Way of Faith is a course designed to welcome people into the Christian faith and the life of the Church. It aims to involve the whole Church in evangelism, the nurture of new believers and ongoing Christian discipleship. It is offered in different sections: contact, Nurture, Growth and Youth Emmaus. Each section has a number of modules each with 4-6 sessions which last about 2 hours. This offers a wide choice of subjects for studying at different stages in our journey together.

The Emmaus course has been an effective tool for evangelism and adult initiation in the UK and throughout the world. Its authors, Stephen Cottrell, Steven Croft, John Finney, Felicity Lawson and Robert Warren happen to be Anglican but the course has been used successfully across different denominations. It is published by Church House Publishing.

“Called into Life”

During Lent, there will be four meetings in St Ninian’s Church to look at one of the Growth courses – “Called into Life”.

This course is intended to help us to know more about what it means to have a vocation – not just for the work we do, whether we are a homemaker, student, employed or retired, but for who we are and how we live the whole of our lives before God.

- The sessions are
- 1) Called by God
 - 2) Called to conversation
 - 3) Called into community
 - 4) Called into mission

Much of the study is based on the story of the Road to Emmaus (Luke 24: 13-53).

Meetings: Tuesday evenings: 7th, 14th, 28th March and 4th April from 7.30pm till 9pm with some refreshments. Note no meeting on 21st March.

Photos from John and Anna's Farewell Eucharist and Bring and Share:



Other news

Congratulations to Reverend John Tsukada on the successful completion of his PhD from Aberdeen University. There was a wonderful and very emotional service on 22 January to wish the Tsukada family “bon voyage” and to pray for God’s blessing on them all as they return to Japan. The service was followed by a shared lunch with a special feast of haggis, neeps and tatties for the Tsukadas with a “dessert” of Scottish songs. They will be sorely missed. Thank you to everybody for making this such a special event.

Prayer Matters

In your own prayers at home, please pray for the following:

For people forced to move because of war and poverty. For open hearts in places where they will find shelter and a new home .

- For the children in Seaton Primary School, especially for their new teachers and staff. For those who teach, study and work at Aberdeen University.
- For those who are unwell, especially Chris Wright in residential care in Milltimber and his wife Jean; for Hilda Farman; for Louise Fortune, daughter of Revd Elsie Fortune of our neighbour Church of Scotland, St Mary’s. For those we carry on our hearts that they may know your peace in body, mind and spirit.
- We pray for wisdom as we seek to call a new bishop using the words of our Diocesan prayer:

“You have given your Holy Spirit to the church to lead us into all truth; bless us with the Spirit’s grace and presence as we discern and choose a new Bishop for our Diocese. Keep us steadfast in faith and united in love that we may seek to hear your voice, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.”

Wellsprings

A prayer group to resource and strengthen us through reflection on Scripture and listening to God



Thursday mornings 10am – 11am
followed by refreshments

First meeting 2 March – please join us whenever you can

Led by Revd Joan Lyon